

Communication Strategies of Live Streamers in the Ampera Area of Palembang to Attract Gifts from Viewers on TikTok Live

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the communication strategies employed by live streamers in the Ampera Bridge area of Palembang to build two-way interactions and attract virtual gifts on the TikTok Live platform. Using a descriptive qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm, the study examined how streamers established a digital presence and employed persuasive tactics in public spaces. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving three primary informants and two supporting informants. The results indicated that streamers employed a systematic communication strategy that encompassed audience recognition, personalized message design, and indirect persuasion techniques that avoided coercion and fostered social presence and parasocial relationships. Within the Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) framework, virtual gifts were identified as transformed nonverbal cues and served as symbolic exchanges of appreciation that strengthened the bond between streamers and their audiences. The study concluded that the effectiveness of these strategies depended on the synergy between streamers' personal characteristics, real-time engagement, and the use of TikTok's interactive features, which transformed the popularity of physical public spaces into digital engagement and financial support.

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1. Introduction

Social media has created opportunities for direct interaction between content creators and audiences; however, the availability of interactive features does not necessarily explain how meaningful communication and relationships develop during live broadcasts. On TikTok Live, viewers can participate through comments, likes, shares, and virtual gifts, yet understanding how live streamers respond to this participation and sustain reciprocal communication requires closer examination (Sujoko et al., 2023; Yaumi et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2026; Al-Obaydi et al., 2022; Hafid et al., 2026). The research problem therefore concerns how communication between live streamers and viewers unfolds on TikTok Live and how these interactions contribute to the development of their relationship. This issue is relevant because social media enables users not only to receive information but also to produce, disseminate, and respond to messages. Selvakumar et al. (2025) explain that social media are internet-based applications that allow users to create and exchange content, while Novianita et al. (2023) state that social media allows users to present themselves, interact, collaborate, and share information. These characteristics have encouraged the emergence of live streaming as a space for two-way communication.

TikTok provides a setting for examining this research problem through its TikTok Live feature, which enables creators and viewers to communicate in real time. Unlike short video content, live broadcasts allow viewers to respond during an ongoing session and provide opportunities for creators to acknowledge and address those responses directly. Khaira et al. (2024) explain that interactions on TikTok occur through comments and live broadcasts, while Limarandani et al. (2025) state that live streaming allows creators to communicate directly with viewers and maintain audience engagement. Accordingly, examining communication on TikTok Live can help clarify how viewer participation and streamer responses shape ongoing interaction and relationships within this digital communication space. In TikTok Live activities, communication strategy is a crucial aspect in building and maintaining audience engagement. Abadi and Ivoniasari (2024) explain that communication strategy is the planning and management of communication to achieve specific goals. In practice, live streamers can use various approaches, such as greeting viewers, addressing users,

responding to comments, using humor, inviting viewers to participate, and delivering persuasive messages to encourage gift giving. Ariansyah et al. (2023) state that communication in live broadcasts requires an interactive approach through a friendly communication style, greeting viewers, and responding to comments. Wattimena et al. (2025) also show that a participatory communication style can build a sense of connection and emotional bond between the communicator and the audience.

One form of audience participation characteristic of TikTok Live is the giving of virtual gifts. Gifts are a form of viewer support for live streamers that have virtual value and can be converted into income for the creator. Febrianti et al. (2025) explain that giving gifts during live broadcasts is a form of viewer support and financial participation for the broadcaster. Zhang (2022) adds that gifting is related to social relationships formed through interactions between streamers and viewers. This means that the better the relationship and interaction, the greater the opportunity for viewers to participate in providing support through virtual gifts.

This phenomenon is evident in the activity of live streamers in the Ampera Bridge area of Palembang. The Ampera area is not only a visually appealing public space but also serves as a location for TikTok Live. Based on the researchers' initial observations, there are differences in the number of gifts received by live streamers, even though they broadcast in relatively similar locations and for similar durations. Live streamers who actively engage with viewers, read and respond to comments, and communicate expressively tend to receive more gifts than more passive streamers. This situation indicates differences in communication strategies for building interaction and encouraging viewer participation.

This phenomenon is relevant to study from the perspective of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), which views communication through digital media as an interaction process mediated by technology. Within the scope of TikTok Live, communication occurs not only through verbal messages, but also through comments, direct responses, the use of interactive features, and giving gifts as a form of audience feedback. Therefore, this study focuses on the communication strategies used by live streamers in the Ampera Bridge area of Palembang to build two-way interactions with viewers and encourage participation by giving virtual gifts through TikTok Live.

Based on the description, the problem of this research is how the communication strategies used by live streamers in the Ampera Bridge area in building two-way interactions with viewers on the TikTok Live platform and what forms of these two-way interactions are based on the perspective of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) theory. This study aims to analyze the communication strategies of live streamers in building two-way interactions with viewers and describe the forms of interactions that occur between live streamers and viewers on TikTok Live. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Communication Science studies, especially regarding persuasive communication strategies, digital media communication, and interactions in live streaming activities, as well as being a practical reference for live streamers in increasing viewer engagement.

This research utilized two main foundations: Persuasive Communication Strategy Theory and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Persuasive communication strategies are used to understand how live streamers plan and manage communication to build engagement and encourage audience response. Sari and Soegiarto (2021) explain that communication strategies can be directed persuasively through message development and media utilization tailored to the communication target. In the context of live streaming, these strategies can be seen through the live streamer's ability to recognize audience characteristics, package messages attractively, apply persuasive techniques, and optimize available media features. The implementation of these strategies allows streamers to adjust their communication style based on audience response, build rapport, maintain attention, and encourage participation through comments, likes, and virtual gifts.

Furthermore, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory is used as a perspective to understand the interaction process that occurs between live streamers and viewers through TikTok Live. CMC describes communication mediated by digital technology, including the exchange of messages, the formation of relationships, and social interactions in an online environment (Ibrahim Adnan & Dudi Iskandar, 2020). In TikTok Live, communication occurs synchronously or in real time through voice, images, comments, likes, emojis, and virtual gifts. These interactions enable the formation of social presence, namely a feeling of closeness and social presence between the streamer and viewers even though the communication takes place through digital devices. Virtual gifts in this context not only have economic value but can also be understood as a symbol of appreciation, attention, and support from viewers for the streamer.

TikTok Live is a digital communication space that brings together live streamers and viewers in live interactions. Nurhasanah et al. (2023) demonstrated that the live streaming feature on social media can facilitate intensive interaction and real-time relationship building. This interaction can develop through personal greetings, responses to comments, the

use of humor, invitations, and the use of various interactive features. In the context of this research, the public space of the Ampera Bridge area serves as a physical setting that contributes to the visual appeal and unique characteristics of live streaming activities. Thus, digital communication strategies are not only related to verbal messages, but also to the utilization of environmental situations, communication styles, and Tik-Tok Live features.

The concept of virtual gifts is crucial to this research because it represents a form of viewer participation that demonstrates their involvement in the broadcast. Febrianti et al. (2025) explain that giving virtual gifts is a form of support and active participation from viewers, strengthening engagement and emotional bonds with the streamer. Therefore, gift-giving is viewed not merely as an economic transaction, but as a form of communication response arising from the interaction between the streamer and the viewer.

Several previous studies have shown that communication and interaction strategies in live streaming play a role in encouraging viewer engagement. Research on the commodification of empathy on TikTok suggests that creators can leverage emotional expressions to encourage viewers to give gifts. Research on the live mud bath phenomenon also suggests specific strategies used to obtain gifts. Meanwhile, Hidayat et al. (2025) found that utilizing TikTok's interactive features and managing feedback can foster two-way communication and emotional closeness with viewers. Other research on gift-giving intentions indicates that communication skills, streamer attractiveness, and parasocial bonds are also related to viewers' gift-giving decisions. However, research specifically examining live streamers' communication strategies in the context of the iconic public space of the Ampera Bridge in Palembang using the perspectives of persuasive communication strategies and CMC is still limited.

Based on this framework, this study uses a qualitative approach to analyze live streamers' communication strategies in identifying audiences, crafting messages, applying persuasive techniques, and optimizing TikTok Live media. A CMC perspective is used to understand how these strategies generate two-way interactions through comments, real-time responses, likes, and virtual gifts, as well as how social presence is formed between live streamers and viewers. These two perspectives are used in a complementary manner to understand how communication conducted by live streamers in the Ampera Bridge area can build viewer engagement and encourage the giving of virtual gifts.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design and an interpretative paradigm. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, meanings, and communication processes involved in live streamers' interactions with viewers through TikTok Live. The descriptive design was used to systematically describe communication strategies, forms of two-way interaction, and the use of TikTok Live features to encourage viewer engagement. The interpretative paradigm guided the examination of live streaming communication as a social reality shaped through interactions and meaning-making between live streamers and viewers.

The research was conducted in the Ampera Bridge area of Palembang, where the live streaming activities took place, and in the virtual space of TikTok Live, where digital interactions occurred. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria aligned with the research objectives. The primary informants were live streamers who actively broadcast in the Ampera Bridge area, had at least three months of experience, broadcast regularly, interacted with viewers, and received virtual gifts. Supporting informants were viewers who actively participated in live broadcasts and had given virtual gifts.

Data collection involved observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly in the Ampera Bridge area and within TikTok Live broadcasts to examine how live streamers greeted viewers, responded to comments, employed persuasive techniques, used interactive features, and acknowledged virtual gifts. Documentation included location photographs, broadcast screenshots, comments, virtual gifts, and TikTok account profiles, which supported the observational and interview data.

In-depth interviews were conducted with both live streamers and viewers to explore their experiences and perspectives on communication during TikTok Live broadcasts. Interviews with live streamers addressed their motivations for broadcasting, strategies for initiating and maintaining conversations, ways of responding to comments, use of persuasive messages, and responses to virtual gifts. Interviews with viewers explored their reasons for watching and participating in broadcasts, their perceptions of the streamers' communication, and their motivations for giving virtual gifts. These interviews provided insight into the meanings informants attributed to their interactions and complemented the observable communication practices documented during the broadcasts.

Data were analyzed interactively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Following the account of qualitative analysis provided by Qomaruddin and Sa'diyah (2024), these stages were treated as continuous and interrelated throughout the research. During data reduction, observation, interview, and documentation data were selected and categorized according to the research focus, particularly audience identification, message packaging, persuasion techniques, and media optimization. The categorized data were then presented in narrative form to identify communication strategy patterns and forms of interaction between live streamers and viewers. Conclusions were drawn by interpreting the findings through the Theory of Persuasive Communication Strategies and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC).

Data validity was assessed through source and methodological triangulation by comparing information from live streamers and viewers and examining its consistency with observations and documentation. The analysis focused on how live streamers' communication strategies supported two-way interactions and how these interactions related to viewers' participation in giving virtual gifts on TikTok Live in the Ampera Bridge area of Palembang.

3. Results and Discussion

The research findings were obtained through in-depth interviews with three live streamers as primary informants: Rian, Keken, and Lutfy, as well as two supporting informants who were active viewers: Lucky and Ira. Interview data was further strengthened through observations of live streaming activities in the Ampera Bridge area of Palembang and documentation of interactions on TikTok Live. The research findings indicate that live streamers' communication strategies for building engagement and attracting virtual gifts include identifying audience characteristics, packaging messages, using persuasive techniques, and providing social appreciation.

3.1. Live Streamer Communication Strategy

Audience characteristics were identified through observations of comments, frequent accounts, participation levels, and response patterns during broadcasts. Rian used his live streaming experience to identify his audience, including young viewers and Palembang residents living away from home. Lutfy utilized live chat to select relevant comments and addressed viewers by name as a form of personal attention. Meanwhile, Keken made an effort to remember viewers with whom he had interacted and greeted new viewers who joined. These findings suggest that audience recognition is conducted directly through real-time interactions, not solely based on viewer numbers.

The message was packaged through a combination of verbal and nonverbal communication. Rian used typical Palembang greetings, sang, recited pantun, and discussed stories and information about the Ampera Bridge and the Musi River. Lutfy emphasized an informal style, energy, spontaneous humor, varied intonation, and active gestures. Keken used a relaxed, humorous, and open communication style, akin to a conversation between friends. All three streamers also utilized facial expressions, smiles, gaze toward the camera, and hand gestures to maintain viewer attention.

The persuasive techniques used tend to be indirect and participatory. Rian, for example, makes a deal with viewers to sing a song of their choice if a certain like or gift target is reached. Keken and Lutfy use humor, conversation, and participatory invitations more often than directly requesting gifts. These findings suggest a tendency toward an anti-begging approach, where streamers try to avoid appearing pushy, positioning gifts as a form of voluntary support for the broadcast activity.

Social appreciation is also a key part of the communication strategy. All three informants consistently mentioned the gift giver's account name, expressed gratitude, and provided expressive responses. For certain gifts, Rian provided additional responses such as dancing, saluting, or singing a song at the giver's request. Lutfy and Keken also provided verbal and nonverbal responses as a form of appreciation. Thus, gifting generated an immediate response from the streamer, which earned viewers recognition within the broadcast space.

3.2. Forms of Two-Way Interaction in the CMC Perspective

The research results show that interactions between live streamers and viewers occur synchronously through live chat, likes, virtual gifts, and other interactive features. Rian, Keken, and Lutfy actively select and respond to incoming comments. When faced with negative comments, all three tend to maintain a positive atmosphere by ignoring them, using humor, or seeking assistance from a moderator. These findings suggest a process of managing live interactions to maintain a conducive communication environment.

Social presence is also evident through the use of personal greetings, account names, gaze into the camera, facial expressions, and informal conversations. Rian and Keken specifically strive to remember frequent viewers and previous

conversations. These patterns create a sense of closeness and personal connection, even though the interaction takes place through a screen.

In addition to live chat, the PK/Battle and target gift features are utilized to increase participation. The PK feature creates a competitive environment that encourages viewers to support their chosen streamer. Meanwhile, target gifts provide a shared goal for viewers to follow during the broadcast. Virtual gifts themselves are not only seen as material support but also as a symbol of viewers' appreciation and attention to the streamer.

Viewer perspectives reinforce these findings. Lucky was drawn to live streaming in the Ampera area by the combination of visuals, local values, and direct interaction. He felt more connected when his comments were read or his account name was mentioned by the streamer. Meanwhile, Ira viewed live streaming as a means of entertainment and a way to relieve boredom. Both indicated that the interactive experience and personal responses from the streamer were part of the reason viewers remained engaged with the broadcast.

Table 1. Live Streamer Communication Strategy in the Ampera Bridge Area

Aspect	Rian	Keken	Luffy
Audience introduction	Observing comments and regular viewers	Remembering the audience and previous conversations	Selecting important comments from live chat
Message packaging	Local greetings, songs, rhymes, Ampera stories	Relaxed, humorous, open	Informal, energetic, spontaneous
Persuasion techniques	Interactive agreements and support targets	Participatory invitation and personal closeness	Humor and quick response
Appreciation gift	Greetings, prayers, movements/dances, songs	Naming and expressive responses	Name calling, thank you, gestures
Managing negative comments	Smile, be calm, or ignore	Humor and moderator assistance	Self-deprecating humor and moderator

Source: processed by researchers, 2026

Table 1 shows that Rian, Keken, and Luffy employed different communication strategies to establish and maintain interactions with viewers. In identifying their audiences, Rian observed comments and recognized regular viewers, while Keken remembered viewers and previous conversations. Luffy selected comments he considered important from the live chat. These practices reflected different ways of directing attention toward viewers: recognizing recurring participation, maintaining conversational continuity, and prioritizing messages during broadcasts.

Differences were also evident in message packaging and persuasion techniques. Rian incorporated local greetings, songs, rhymes, and stories about the Ampera Bridge, connecting his broadcasts with the surrounding cultural and physical setting. He also used interactive agreements and support targets to encourage participation. Keken adopted a relaxed, humorous, and open communication style, combining participatory invitations with personal closeness. Luffy used informal, energetic, and spontaneous messages, relying on humor and quick responses to sustain interaction. These findings indicated that persuasive communication took different forms across the three streamers, ranging from explicit invitations to participate to conversational engagement through familiarity and humor.

All three streamers acknowledged virtual gifts, although their responses varied. Rian offered greetings, prayers, movements or dances, and songs. Keken mentioned gift-givers' names and responded expressively, while Luffy acknowledged them through name mentions, expressions of thanks, and gestures. These responses made gift-giving visible within the broadcast and provided opportunities for direct acknowledgment of individual viewers. However, the strategies described in the table alone did not establish whether particular responses increased the frequency or value of subsequent gifts.

The streamers also differed in managing negative comments. Rian smiled, remained calm, or ignored such comments. Keken used humor and moderator assistance, while Luffy employed self-deprecating humor and moderator support. These approaches suggested efforts to manage disruptions while maintaining the flow of communication. Overall,

Table 1 illustrates how audience recognition, message packaging, persuasion, gift acknowledgment, and comment management formed interconnected elements of the streamers' communication practices in the Ampera Bridge area.

3.3. Persuasive Communication Strategies in Building Audience Support

The findings presented in Table 1 indicated that the three live streamers employed audience identification, message packaging, persuasion, and gift acknowledgment in their communication practices. Rian identified viewers by observing comments and recognizing regular participants. Keken drew on his familiarity with viewers and previous conversations, while Luffy selected comments he considered important from the live chat. These findings illustrated how audience identification occurred during broadcasts through attention to viewers' messages and participation. This pattern was consistent with the emphasis on audience understanding and message management in persuasive communication strategies (Sari & Soegiarto, 2021).

The data also showed differences in how the streamers packaged their messages. Rian used local greetings, songs, rhymes, and stories about the Ampera Bridge. Keken adopted a relaxed, humorous, and open style, while Luffy communicated informally, energetically, and spontaneously. These practices indicated that the streamers incorporated verbal and expressive elements into their interactions. Rian's communication drew on local cultural references, whereas Keken's and Luffy's approaches emphasized conversational familiarity, humor, and responsiveness.

Regarding persuasion, Table 1 recorded that Rian used interactive agreements and support targets, Keken employed participatory invitations and personal closeness, and Luffy relied on humor and quick responses. These findings supported the interpretation that audience support was approached through interactive and entertainment-oriented communication. However, the table did not establish whether the streamers avoided direct gift requests throughout their broadcasts. Therefore, describing their practices as an "anti-begging approach" required additional interview statements or observational examples.

Gift acknowledgment provided further evidence of how the streamers responded to audience support. Rian acknowledged gifts through greetings, prayers, movements or dances, and songs. Keken mentioned gift-givers' names and responded expressively, while Luffy used name mentions, expressions of thanks, and gestures. These practices illustrated a reciprocal exchange in which viewers' gifts received a communicative response from the streamer. They suggested that gift acknowledgment formed part of relationship maintenance, although the available data did not demonstrate that these responses increased subsequent gift-giving.

3.4. Virtual Gift as a Form of Digital Nonverbal Cues in CMC

From a Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) perspective, the findings in Table 1 illustrated how virtual gifts became part of exchanges between live streamers and viewers. The recorded acknowledgment practices differed across informants: Rian responded with greetings, prayers, movements or dances, and songs; Keken mentioned viewers' names and gave expressive responses; and Luffy responded through name mentions, thanks, and gestures. These examples showed that virtual gifts prompted verbal and nonverbal responses within the digital communication environment.

The findings supported an interpretation of virtual gifts as digital cues that streamers acknowledged as audience contributions. Nevertheless, the meaning attributed to a gift by its sender could not be determined solely from the streamer's response. Claims that viewers gave gifts to express appreciation, provide emotional support, or gain recognition required supporting evidence from viewer interviews. The available findings therefore demonstrated acknowledgment practices more directly than viewers' motivations.

The audience identification practices also illustrated the role of live chat in synchronous communication. Rian monitored comments and regular viewers, Keken referred to previous conversations, and Luffy selected particular comments for attention. Together, these practices indicated that viewer messages formed part of the streamers' ongoing communication. When considered alongside gift acknowledgment, the findings suggested that TikTok Live interaction involved exchanges through both textual messages and digital symbols. Further observational sequences and interview excerpts were needed to establish how viewers interpreted these responses and whether they encouraged continued participation.

3.5. Audience Perspective and the Formation of Reciprocity

Interviews with Lucky and Ira revealed that viewers are looking for more than just entertainment, but also a social experience when watching live streams. Lucky is drawn to the combination of the Ampera atmosphere, local values, and personal interactions with streamers, while Ira places greater emphasis on entertainment and stress relief. These

differences indicate that view-ers' motivations vary, but a pleasant communication experience is one of the el-ements that maintains their engagement.

Mentioning an account's name, responding to comments, and expressing gratitude after a gift creates a reciprocal communication. Viewers offer attention or support, while streamers offer recognition and social experiences in return. Therefore, support through virtual gifts is inextricably linked to the quality of the relationship formed during the interaction.

The results of this study indicate that a live streamer's success in attract-ing virtual gifts is determined not only by their ability to solicit support, but pri-marily by their ability to build interactive, personal, and sustainable communica-tion relationships. Persuasive communication strategies play a role in guiding the interaction process, while CMC explains how TikTok technology enables this process to occur synchronously and generate social presence. The characteris-tics of the Ampere Bridge area then become supporting elements that provide visual appeal and locality to the live streaming experience. These findings con-firm that communication strategies, technological characteristics, and the context of public space interact to shape audience engagement and encourage virtual gift giving.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research results, the communication strategy of live streamers in the Ampere Bridge area through TikTok Live is carried out by recognizing audience characteristics, delivering messages in a relaxed and spontaneous manner, using humor and persuasive communication, and showing appreciation for audience participation through comments and virtual gifts. From a Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) perspective, interactions between live streamers and viewers occur two-way and synchronously through the comments column, virtual gifts, and TikTok Live's interactive features. The use of these features also helps establish a social presence, so that even though communication takes place through digital media, viewers still feel close and involved with the live streamer. Thus, TikTok Live is not only a medium for delivering content, but also a social interaction space that allows for engagement between live streamers and viewers.

Future research is recommended to expand the study of communication strategies in live streaming using different objects, locations, and platforms, as well as a more diverse research approach. For live streamers, the results of this study can be used as a guide to better understand audience characteristics, use appropriate language and messages, respond consistently to interactions, and optimize TikTok Live features to build audience engagement. For live streamers broadcasting in public spaces, activities should still be mindful of the comfort and order of the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, viewers are expected to participate actively and wisely, while maintaining digital communication ethics when providing comments and virtual gifts.

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